

Learning Module 11

Biographical and Genealogical Sources

Biographical Sources

Types of Questions

- specific facts about an individual
- information on a person's writings

Direct and Indirect Sources

- a direct source provides factual information about an individual or individuals
- an indirect source provides citations to sources about an individual or individuals

Types of Sources

- Dictionaries
- Databases and Indexes
- Encyclopedias
- Newspapers (Obituaries, Birth and Marriage announcements, feature articles, etc)
- Who's Who
- Periodicals (entertainment, current events)
- Biographies

Evaluation of Sources

- Scope: Who is included in the work? What are the criteria for inclusion?
- Comprehensiveness: How many of the people who fulfill the criteria for inclusion are actually included?

- Accuracy: Did the creator of the biographical tool use primary or secondary sources? Do the included facts match other similar tools?
- Currency: current versus retrospective biography
- References: Sources used or not used. A bibliography
- Format: print, electronic, cd-rom

Selection of Sources

- needs of users
- cost of materials
- uniqueness of materials

Search Strategies (using biographical sources)

- ready reference questions
 - generally request for simple facts about a person's life
 - good sources include biographical dictionaries, encyclopedias or databases
 - need to select general or specific tools based on the person's occupation, etc.
- general questions
 - generally a request for background information about a person's life
 - good sources included biographies and who's who books
 - a biographical index may be useful in locating a biography
- research questions
 - a request for an in depth search into a person's life, this type of question may involve searching for information about a person as well as information about their works
 - this may involve beginning with the tools used to find basic information and expanding to newspaper clippings and other works

Sources

Biographical Indexes

- Almanac of Famous People (C.W. Post Main Reference CT104 .B56)
- Biography and genealogy master index (C.W. Post Main Reference Z5305.U5 B57 OVSZ)

- * Biography Index (C.W. Post Periodicals)
- Current Biography (a periodical, not at CW Post)
- * Current Biography (C.W. Post Main Reference CT100 .C8)
- Current Biography Yearbook (C.W. Post Main Reference Annex Level B CT100 .C8)
- Marquis Who's Who index to Who's Who books (C.W. Post Main Reference Z5301 .M37a OVSZ)
- The (UK) Dictionary of National Biography: from the earliest times to 1900 (C.W. Post Main Reference Annex Level BDA28 .D47)

Biographical Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and Databases

- African American Biographical Database <http://aabd.chadwyck.com/>
- * American National Biography, successor to the Dictionary of American Biography (C.W. Post Main Reference CT213 .A68 1999)
- American Women: Fifteen Hundred Biographies with Over 1,400 Portraits by Frances Elizabeth Willard, Mary Ashton Rice Livermore [via Google Books](#)
- Biographical Dictionary <http://www.s9.com/>
- Biographies of Notable Women <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/womenhistbios.html>
- * Black Women in America (C.W. Post Main Reference E185.86 .B542 2005 OVSZ)
- * Dictionary of American biography. Comprehensive index : complete through supplement ten (C.W. Post Main Reference E176 .D563 Index 4)
- * Dictionary of National Biography (C.W. Post Main Reference Annex Level B DA28 .D525 1996)
- * Documents of American History (C.W. Post Main Reference E173 .C66 1973b)
- Encyclopedia of American Biography (C.W. Post Main Reference CT213 .E53 1996)
- * Encyclopedia of World Biography (C.W. Post Main Reference CT103 .E56 1998 OVSZ) also via [Gale Virtual Reference Library](#)
- * Facts about the Presidents, Joseph Nathan Kane (C.W. Post Main Reference E176.1 .K3 1989)
- Great Lives From History - series (C.W. Post Main Reference CT119 .G69 2006) - this is the volume about the 19th century
- The Hutchinson Dictionary of Scientific Biography <http://cwplib.proxy.liu.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/liu/Doc?id=10130733> (older version at C.W. Post Main Reference Q141 .D5 OVSZ)
- * Jewish women in America : an historical encyclopedia / ed. Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore
- Merriam Webster's Biographical Dictionary
- * Notable American Women : a biographical dictionary completing the twentieth century (C.W. Post Main Reference CT3260 .N5725 2004)

- Notable Black American Women (C.W. Post Main Reference E185.96 .N68 1992 OVSZ)
- Notable Women in World Government (C.W. Post Main Reference HQ1236 .N68 2000)

Who's Who

- * Marquis Who's Who in America
<http://cwplib.proxy.liu.edu/login?url=http://www.xreferplus.com/entry.jsp?volid=447&source=marc> (also C.W. Post Main Reference Annex Level B E176 .W642 OVSZ)
- Who Was Who in America (C.W. Post Main Reference E176 .W64 1607-1996 index)
- Marquis Who's Who in the World
<http://cwplib.proxy.liu.edu/login?url=http://www.xreferplus.com/entry.jsp?volid=446&source=marc>
- Who's who in Israel and Jewish personalities from all over the world (C.W. Post Center for Business Research Reference DS125.3.A2 W53)
- Who's who among living authors of older nations, covering the literary activities of living authors and writers of all countries of the world, except the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, Newfoundland, the Philippine islands, the West Indies, and Central America. (C.W. Post Main Reference Z1010 .W62 1966bx)
- Who's who in Christianity
<http://cwplib.proxy.liu.edu/login?url=http://www.xreferplus.com/entry.jsp?volid=93&source=marc>
- Who's who in ancient Egypt
<http://cwplib.proxy.liu.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/liu/Doc?id=10060988>

Newspapers and Newspaper Indexes (see Periodical Indexes)

- The New York Times Annual Obituaries
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/obituaries/>
- Obituaries Research Guide <http://www.deathindexes.com/obituaries.html>

Other

- A Dictionary of Surnames (C.W. Post Main Reference CS2385 .H27 1988)

- A Dictionary of Heraldry: feudal coats of arms and pedigrees (C.W. Post Main Reference CR13 .F67 1989 OVSZ)
- Heraldic Dictionary, Notre Dame <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/>
- Biographies (many examples)

Genealogical Sources

Types of Questions

- looking for information about a particular individual
- looking for information about a particular family in a particular area
- may be searching for specific documents such as census records, land records, etc.
- local history questions - information about a particular area

Types of Genealogical Sources

- Government Records
 - Census Records (e.g. <http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.html#p=4>)
 - Civil/State Registration: Birth, Marriage and Death records (e.g. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/familyhistory/bmd/?homepage=fr-bmd>)
 - Directories (Telephone, City and Business)
 - Immigration Lists (e.g. [Ellis Island](http://www.ellis-island.org/) and Castle Garden) and Naturalisation Records (<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/naturalization/>)
 - Military Records (Enlistment Records, Draft Records, etc) (http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/firstworldwar/05180102/0518010201_e.html)
 - Tax Records, Land Records and Petitions
 - Wills, Probate and Administration (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nydutche/>)
- Religious Records
 - Church Registers: Baptism, Marriage and Burial records (<http://www.freereg.org.uk/cgi/Search.pl>)
 - Synagogue Records: Birth, Marriage, Death and Divorce records
 - Cemetery Records (<http://ogs.andornot.com/CemMenu.aspx>) and Funeral Home Records
- Commercial/Corporate Records
 - Newspapers (Obituaries, Birth and Marriage Notices, etc)
 - Passenger Lists and Ship Records (<http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/articles/articles.shtml>)

- Family Records
 - Family Genealogies (published and unpublished)
 - Oral Histories, Family Documents and Traditions
(<http://www.mdch.org/collection.aspx?id=11150>)
- Published Sources
 - Local Histories and Atlases (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/CountyAtlas/>)
 - Encyclopedias of Genealogies (e.g. Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy or Irish, Italian, Latvian etc.)
- DNA Records
 - DNA Records (<https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/>)

Evaluation of Sources

- Scope: Who or what is included in the work? What are the criteria for inclusion?
- Comprehensiveness: How comprehensive is the work? What time period is covered?
- Accuracy: Did the creator of the work use primary or secondary sources? Primary sources are required to prove a family connection, but secondary sources may be a good way to point users in the right direction.
- References: Sources used or not used. A bibliography.
- Format: print, electronic, cd-rom
- Licensing: are materials available for free or is there a fee

Selection of Sources

- needs of users
- cost of materials
- uniqueness of materials
- local history collections

Search Strategies

- General Strategies
 - start with a known individual
 - record details of your own life
 - date and place of birth
 - full name
 - names of close relatives
 - locations where you have lived
 - religion and important religious dates

- talk to your parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles etc.
 - record details of their life
 - record family stories
- locate known individuals in primary documents in order to find the names of related but currently unknown individuals
- search for vital statistics on known individuals to locate name of parents/relatives
- locate individuals who are in a specific area
 - library may have local histories of the area which contain family names
 - census data will list location and occupation
 - library should have database/listing of local history sources and genealogy sources
- locate individuals who are in a specific occupation
 - directories of individual businesses and employees
 - census data

Sources

First Steps in Genealogy

- Dollarhide, William. 2006. Getting Started in Genealogy Online
- Perl, Lila. 1989. The Great Ancestor Hunt: The Fun of Finding Out Who You Are (children's)
- * Vital Records Handbook, Thomas Jay Kemp
- RootsWeb - Guide to Tracing Family Trees - Getting Started
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rwguide/lesson1.htm>
 - Full Guide <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rwguide/>
- NARA - Starting Genealogy and Family History Research
<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/about-research.html>
- Family Search - Discovering your Family Tree
http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/rg/frameset_rg.asp?Dest=G1&Aid=&Gid=&Lid=&Sid=&Did=&Juris1=&Event=&Year=&Gloss=&Sub=&Tab=&Entry=&Guide=DisTree.ASP
- Cyndi's List - Beginners Resources <http://www.cyndislist.com/beginner.htm>
- Library and Archives Canada - Canadian Genealogy Centre
 - What to do First <http://collectionscanada.ca/genealogy/022-601-e.html>
 - Tracing your Ancestors in Canada (booklet)
<http://collectionscanada.ca/genealogy/022-607.001-e.html>

US Sources for Genealogical Information

- NARA - National Archives and Records Association <http://www.archives.gov/>
 - Genealogists and Family Historians <http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/>
- Library of Congress: Local History and Genealogy Reading Room
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/>
 - Library of Congress: Local History and Genealogy Reading Room: Bibliographies and Guides http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib_guid/
- The US Gen Web Project <http://www.usgenweb.org/>
- Greenwood, Val D. 2000. The researcher's guide to American genealogy
- NEHGS - New England Historic Genealogical Society
<http://www.newenglandancestors.org/> (subscriber site, search is free)

New York Sources

- New York Historical Society <https://www.nyhistory.org/web/>
- Ellis Island <http://www.ellisland.org/>
- Wolfman, Ira. 1991. Do People Grow on Family Trees? Genealogy for Kids and Other Beginners: The Official Ellis Island Handbook (children's)
- * The Famine Immigrants, Lists of Irish Immigrants Arriving at the Port of New York, 1846-1851, Ira Glazier, ed., Baltimore: Genealogical Press, 1984
(<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=SB302&bc=sb>)
- Long Island Genealogy <http://www.longislandgenealogy.com/>
- Nassau County - NY GenWeb Project
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nynassau/>

Genealogical Sources for Specific Groups

- * Italian-American Family History: A Guide to Researching and Writing about Your Heritage, Sharon DeBartolo Carmack
- * Italians to America Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports, 1880-1899, ed. Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby
- Jewish Genealogy <http://www.jewishgen.org/>
- * Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, ed. William Filby and Mary K. Meyer
(<http://www.worldvitalrecords.com/indexinfo.aspx?ix=pili> subscriber site)
- * River roads to freedom: fugitive slave notices and sheriff notices found in Illinois sources, Helen Cox Tregillis

Non US Genealogical Sources

- Canadian Genealogy Centre (Library and Archives Canada) <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/genealogy/index-e.html>
- Combined Canadian Sources - That's My Family <http://www.thatsmyfamily.info/>
- The National Archives: UK Government Records and Information Management <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- Genuki - UK & Ireland Genalogy <http://www.genuki.org.uk/>
- Germany <http://www.progenealogists.com/germany/>
- Italy <http://www.gentracer.com/italy.html>
- The Netherlands [http://genealogy.about.com/od/netherlands/Netherlands Dutch Genealogy Family History.htm](http://genealogy.about.com/od/netherlands/Netherlands_Dutch_Genealogy_Family_History.htm)
- France <http://www.geneaservice.com/>
- * Jewish Roots in Poland: Pages from the Past and Archival Inventories, Miriam Weiner

General Sources

- Allen County Public Library <http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/index.html>
- Ancestry.com <http://www.ancestry.com/> (subscriber site, search is free)
- Centre for Family History and Genealogy at Brigham Young University <http://familyhistory.byu.edu/>
- Cindy's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet <http://www.cyndislist.com/>
- Family History and Genealogy Record (LDS Library) <http://www.familysearch.org/>
- Federation of Genealogical Societies <http://www.fgs.org/>
- Godfrey Memorial Library: A Library of Genealogy and History <http://www.godfrey.org/>
- Heir Lines <http://uu2mk8se5u.search.serialssolutions.com/?V=1.0&L=UU2MK8SE5U&S=JCS&C=HEIRLINLEBOH&T=marc>
- National Genealogical Society <http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/>
- Rootsweb <http://www.rootsweb.com/>

Genealogy Courses

- National Institute for Genealogical Studies, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto http://plc.fis.utoronto.ca/c_genealogy.asp

DNA Research

- National Geographic Genographic Project <https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/>
- Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation <http://www.smgf.org/>
- Family Tree DNA <http://www.familytreedna.com/>
- Y Search <http://www.ysearch.org/>
- Mitosearch <http://www.mitosearch.org/>